1: Raswan T-3 (1913-35) 1947 MD4 Rwala MD4
Bedouins MJ4

Two days later we camped at the well of Al-Hajal, where our camels and horses were watered. One of the Fid'ans scraped a shallow hole in the soil and spread the saddle leather from one of the camels over it. Into this simple but practical trough we poured the stale water from the well.

After we had watered our animals, we travelled onward in the dry bed of the Al-Hajal *wadi*. We were crossing a flat between two branches of it when suddenly shots rang out and bullets whistled over our heads.

The Fid'an wheeled instantly to gallop out of range, but they did not get far. Our assailants, imperfectly visible but obviously numerous, followed up their warning volley with a raking fire that in as many seconds unhorsed four of the fugitives. Seeing that to escape was impossible, and to fight hopeless, they all stopped and signalled their surrender to the advancing force of camel-riders. More than a hundred of these had grown out of the ground, as it were, before my astonished eyes. The Fid'an had walked into a trap. They had been too reckless even to send scouts ahead.

I knew instantly that the newcomers were Ruala. The Saba have as intimate a knowledge of that region, but only the Ruala take the field with so many fine racing-camels; the Saba, like the Fid'an, favour horses.

"The Lord be with us!" exclaimed Matan, the leader of the Fid'an freebooters, now thoroughly frightened. He clearly thought himself lost; and he had every reason to believe that I should use the opportunity of paying him back in kind. But I reassured him. "We have made peace with thee," I said, "and I shall tell the leader of

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Saudi Arabia MJ1
Bedouin MJ4

to be seen all along the way. One large variety is about a foot and a half long, and its meat is esteemed a great delicacy by the Bedouins, who call it "the fish of the desert." Many smaller lizards are found, and a few birds. There are also tracks of a wolf to be made out occasionally, but that is a rare occurrence, as is also the sign of a fox. The lizards may be able to dig down far enough in their holes to reach damp soil, but certainly the gazelles must get their necessary water from the few plants that remain succulent and fresh in the summer months.

And there are people who live in that desert, not travelers only, but permanent residents. They live there not merely during the spring when there is a little rain, but the year around. How can men live in a country like that? The well is the answer. The little green vegetation to be seen in the spring when the meager rains come soon dries down, and the inexperienced eye of the stranger would scarcely find it. Nevertheless, it is sufficient for goats and camels and perhaps sheep to graze upon if wells can be found in addition where they can be watered every evening. So it happens that the most precious things in Arabia are the wells. Caravan routes may be crooked, but the reason is never far to seek. For three or four days camels can travel without a drop of water, but eventually they must drink like all the other animals in the world. Some parts of the desert which are richest in vegetation are quite deserted as far as human beings are concerned, and the reason is the same. In the summer when the thermometer may occasionally reach 135° at noon, it is no use to discover an area covered with abundant dry fodder. It is the well that is the essential thing. Wherever water can be secured, there men can live. It is not such a life as would be popular in

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M34

where wells are somewhat close together and the for-
age of the country allows it, goats can be kept, but these
must be watered at least once a day. They furnish hair
for tent-cloth, and thus it is the goat that shelters the
Bedouin from the elements. In districts where forage
and water are still more abundant, sheep are raised,
chiefly for their wool or as articles of export. Mutton is
the favorite meat all over Arabia, and although for a les-
ser occasion goats or camels may answer, when a great
sheikh gives a feast, sheep are the animals slaughtered.

Much has been written, and justly, about the beauty
and the endurance of Arabian horses, but they are not an
economic asset. In Central Arabia a horse is a pure lux-
ury. Often in summer they must live on camel's milk
just as humans do. They are kept and treated as house-
hold pets and are very intelligent and affectionate. Their
only function is to furnish an aristocratic mount for
pleasure, for state occasions and for war. During part
of the year there is abundant pasturage for them, but
they are a luxury afforded only by the sheikhs and the
very rich and their number is small.

There are years in Arabia when the spring rains fail
partially or completely, and then the animals die by thou-
sands, or are driven to the nearest town to be sold for a
song. In such years starvation stalks abroad through the
land. Little children die because there is no food suit-
able for such tender stomachs, and the adults are even
more gaunt and thin than usual. The sheikhs are nearly
bankrupted by the number of poor they have to feed,
and the whole community waits and prays for more rain
the coming spring.

At the best the life of a desert Bedouin is one of a
poverty so bitter and deep that Westerners have little idea
of it. The entire outfit of a family could be bought for a
mere trifle.

5: Harrison D-4 (1912-1924) 1924 M1 Middle East
Bedouin M54

it on over his old one, and since none of his garments are ever removed, the older garment gradually falls to pieces and after a while disappears altogether. This story, like much of the fiction of the world, though not strictly accurate is based on painful truth, for baths are not so frequent in the Bedouin's life as they should be, and the laundering of clothes is still less adequate.

But it is easy to blame the Bedouin for being dirty. Dirty he certainly is and his clothes even more so, but what is to be expected when water is so scarce that for lack of it animals frequently go thirsty, and sometimes even men? We forget that cleanliness is a luxury, and a very expensive luxury at that. Through the summer the Bedouin women wash their hair in camel's urine because water is so precious that it cannot be wasted for such a purpose. The men apparently go without washing. Clothes require no comment, for their condition is what might be imagined. By far the commonest hunting in Arabia is the hunt for wild game in the hair and clothes. It is always successful. The ablutions required before prayers are commonly performed with sand. The delight of such people upon arriving at some place where water is abundant and where bodies and clothes can be washed is a good thing to see.

The diet of these desert Arabs is ordinarily very frugal. A drink of camel's milk and a handful of dates are a day's rations for an adult, and more is not expected. There will also be an occasional drink of coffee, of which the Bedouin is inordinately fond. Even the poorest Bedouin tent will have some sort of a battered and worn coffee pot for this purpose. Bread is a rare luxury in such homes, and meat even a rarer one. A feeble old camel on the verge of dissolution will render a last service

Bedouin MJ4 117

True Bedu coffee is strong, devoid of milk or sugar but flavoured with herbs; and its consumption is the occasion of much social activity—the rounding off of the day, and an opportunity for discussion, and the reception of guests. For the Badawin, if not for city dwellers, coffee is truly the 'wine of Islam', and the equipment of all Badawin households includes at least one carpet, which is spread before the hearth, a mortar, and coffee pots and cups. A few cooking pots, and one or two large trays and bowls for communal eating make up the remainder of the culinary equipment.

Clothing of the Badawin is simple. A long robe of thick material is the principal, sometimes in fact the only, garment. In winter a waterproof cloak of woven camel hair is worn. A voluminous headcloth, held in place by a rope or band, is wound round the head so as to give protection to the face and neck, and rawhide, heelless sandals are worn on the feet.

Water is usually too precious for much washing[1]—indeed, the Koran permits the ceremonial use of sand in the daily ablutions which are enjoined on all Moslems—and animal urine is frequently used as a substitute. Badawin food is monotonous and scanty. Most important are milk products: curds, buttermilk, various kinds of cheese—of which *labné*, a kind of cream cheese, is the most widespread—and *samné*, or butter. In addition, wheat, barley, and occasionally a little rice are obtained by barter, blackmail, or brigandage from agriculturalists, or else grown very sporadically by the nomads themselves.[2] Small amounts of dried fruit, usually dates, are also eaten. Meat is provided only as a great luxury, since animals themselves are in effect a kind of fixed capital—owners must live from the yield, not upon the animal itself. Apart, then, from occasions of high festival, when special slaughtering takes place, only those animals that die naturally are eaten.

Meals are served first to the older men of the tent, each man using his dagger as a knife, and fingers as a fork,[3] after which, when they are satisfied, it is the turn of the younger men and boys. Later still come the women, and finally the girls—the sexes never intermingling during meals. On occasion when supplies are plentiful, the Badawin

[1] It has been said of a present-day certain Wahhabi tribe of Arabia that all adult members have at least once in their lifetime been forced to exist on water taken from the hump of a camel.

[2] Patches of ground are roughly sown with grain, and later in the year tribesmen return to harvest the crop.

[3] As far as possible, use of the left hand is avoided in polite Arab society—this hand is employed for menial and unpleasant tasks.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MJ4

B 224 251 prepare the venison with salt into what they call *yellah*, a sort of biltong, slashing it into long slices to allow the salt to penetrate and to enable ribbon-like strips to be easily removed at home for food.

k 132 This is a season for rejoicing, the rains are close at hand, there is a nip in the air of a morning and fires are in demand at night. Once again the desert comes to life after the long, weary, soul-killing heat of summer, the scorching suffocating duststorms, the need to stay close-camped near water, and the ever-present dread that your enemy knows where you are and by a sudden dash may carry off your camels, nay, all you possess, in one swift raid.

B ● 312 132 For water, the various tent dwellers send in camels to the nearest wells, often as far as 30 miles away, once in five, six or seven days. Neither camel, sheep nor man is very thirsty these days, so water is no longer the immediate necessity of life. As the first rains fall and grass begins to come up, water is less and less required by the live-stock, till finally in the full *rabi'* (spring) when grass is well up and succulent, only man requires it.

B 223 k 223 This is the season also when the Shaikhs of Kuwait, as well as all other rulers in Arabia, start going deep into the high desert in search of *hubara*. The practice of hunting on camel-back has gone. The motor car serves the purpose better. Great hunters, like His Highness Shaikh Ahmad, Shaikh 'Ali al Khalifah and Shaikh Salim al Hamud, are out two or three times a week. They nearly always spend at least one night bivouacking in the blue (*khalla*) without tent or covering beyond their *'abbas*. It is unmanly and soft to take even a small shelter. The huntsman and falcon bearers (*khaddám*) are all of the Rashaida tribe, born Essus all, with eyes like their own hawks, and with the uncanniest knowledge of the habits of the *hubara*. The courtly and religious Nazzal, famous over North and Central Arabia for his knowledge and eye for country, is there, so are Sa'ud bin Nimran, the lion-hearted and jovial; Addas, the hawk-eyed; Gharaiyib, the smeller of *hubara* from afar, and great raider of war days; Sa'ad, the tracker; Mirshid al Shammari, of the renowned Ibn Twala clan, and old Saif bin Ta'ami, companion of the great Mubarak in many a past raid.

Of hawks we have the famous "Dhifb", "Kabeir", "Sultán" and

1/1 [early November -- August]

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Bedouins MJ4

000 of Arabia lead makes for religion, and instils into the heart of man the greater virtues that make life worth living.

THE TRIBAL DÍRAH

619 Every Badawin tribe in Arabia has its *dírah* or tribal country,
[721] through which it roams with its camels in the autumn, winter and
312 spring, and in which lie its permanent wells, the jealously treasured
361 possessions of various sections of the tribe, on which these sections camp in summer.*

Let us take, for example, the great Mutair tribe ('Ilwa and Wasil) of North-East Arabia. Its *dírah* is roughly enclosed by the following boundaries:

On the north—By the Iraq Neutral Zone (Tawál al Dhafir) and the Kuwait frontier as far east as the Shaqq.
On the east—By the Shaqq depression and a line running south of same to Jariya al Sifla, Taraibi and al Khafaisat.
On the south—A rough line from the town of 'Anaiza, Zilfi, Majma'a to al Khafaisat including the town of Artawiyah.
On the west—A rough line from the Tawál al Dhafir (Iraq Neutral Zone) through Thamani (south end of Bátin) to Buraida and 'Anaiza.

Its chief group of wells which need be mentioned are:

(*a*) Hafar al Bátin, the property of ibn Ashwan (Braih group of the Wasl Mutair).
(*b*) Sáfá, the property of ibn Lami (Jiblan).
(*c*) Jariya Iya, the property of Al Shuqair (Dushan).
(*d*) Jariya Sifla, the property of Al Fugum (Al Sahabba).
(*e*) Hábá, the property of Al Májid (Dushan).
(*f*) Qara'a, the property of Al Shuqair (Dushan).
(*g*) Wabra, the property of the Dushan.
(*h*) Qaiyah, the property of Al Faisal (Dushan).
(*i*) Dijani, the property of Al Bara'asa (Muaha).

[622] The Dushan being the ruling clan, with its Shaikh Al Duwish,
361 controls also the tribal capital, or head village of Artawiyah.
69 This latter is an 'Ikhwan centre, and the creation of the present Ruler of Sa'udi Arabia, who for political reasons placed in each tribal

* A reference to the tribal map at the end of this book will be found convenient.

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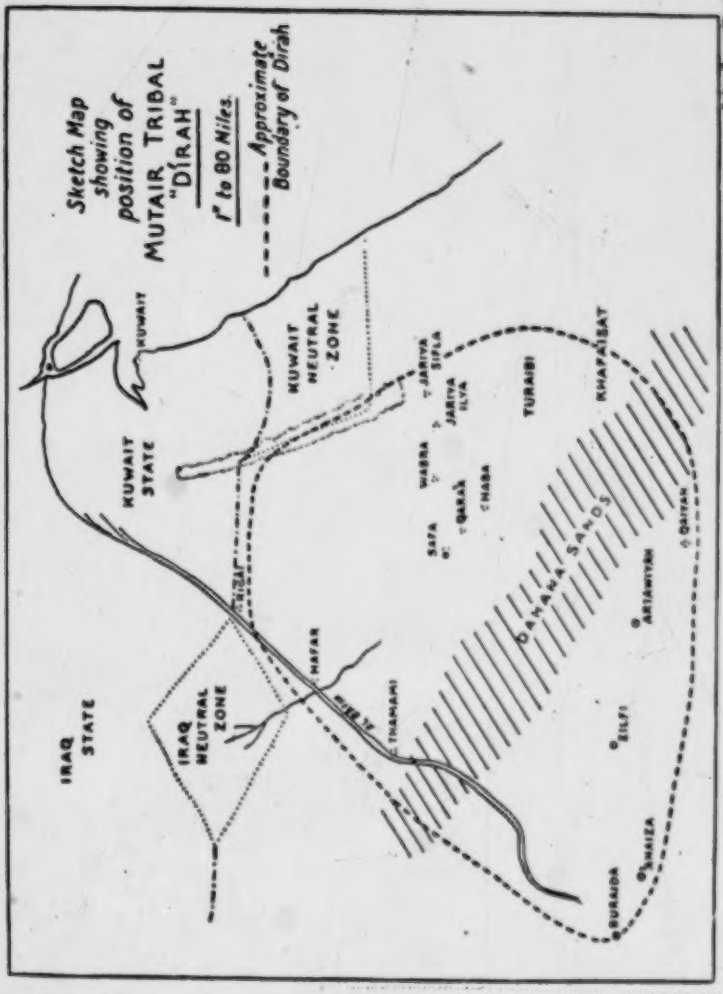
Bedouins MJ4



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619
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P46a

1: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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619 361 *dirah* a small township as a sign that the whole tribe had embraced Wahhabi-ism, and abandoned its old ignorant and roaming existence.

133 312 288 The terrain included in the Mutair tribal *dirah* consists of part of the sandy *Dahana* region in the south, the rocky and broken *Summân* and *Wiriya* regions in the centre, and the steppe-like tablelands of the *Mujdair—Qara'a-* and *Musannat* regions in the north.

The whole *dirah* is a choice and good one, and *'arfaj*, *nassi* and *hamdh*, the mainstay of camels and most perfect of all grazing for these animals, are to be found in plenty when the rainfall is good.

This Mutair *dirah* is approximately 120 miles broad by 180 miles long, and may be taken as a typical example of an average tribe's homeland. There are, of course, other tribes who own larger and more extensive areas, but then scarcity of water and poorer grazing has compelled them from earliest times to seize and hold these bigger blocks of land. For in actual fact a tribe does not want a larger tract than is sufficient for its needs. So if a tribe's country is rich in water and all forms of grazing, all it requires is an area as big as that of the Mutair.

361 619 The tribes surrounding the Mutair, who own *dirahs* similar to theirs, are as follows:

The 'Awazim and 'Ajman on the east and south-east.

The Sbei and Sahul on the south.

The Harb, Shammar and Dhafir on the west, and Kuwait territory on the north, which in olden times, and before boundaries of western conception were introduced, all belonged to the Mutair, except for the narrow coastal strip which was included in the 'Awazim *dirah*.*

619 221 A tribe does not, of course, remain always isolated in its own *dirah*. If rains are good and grazing is plentiful, it naturally stops at home, but if rains fail it must migrate to places where grazing exists, and so overflows into the territories of its neighbours. It cannot, of course,

* It should be realised that there are two other great groups of the Mutair tribe, stretching from the Qasim in the centre of Arabia to near Madina in the Hijaz. They are known as the Bani 'Abdillah Mutair, and Maymun, and in numbers and strength are perhaps superior to their cousins the 'Ilwa and Braih described above. The whole tribe, of course, is one, and though the Bani 'Abdilla have their own powerful Shaikhs, they will all follow the standard of Al Duwish the hereditary Shaikh who resides at Artawiyah.†

† For the names of the Mutair, 'Awazim and Shammar Shaikhs see Appendix II. A map of the Mutair Tribal *dirah* will be found at the end of the book.

l: Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Horrors of Summer

THE ANNUAL MOVES

312 361 283 182 221 During the summer months, i.e. June, July, August, September and half October, the Badawin world of North-East Arabia concentrates on its wells (*gulbán*), which in each case are groups of wells lying close together and in number anything from five to fifty. Here they camp (*igaiyathun*), their tents close together, their herds of camels and sheep grazing in close proximity, for the animals now have to be watered daily. Here the weary and long agony of summer has to be endured. Man and woman, child as well as horse, sheep and camel go through a period of real hardship and suffering. The heat is intense (the tent temperature often reaches 125° F.), supplies are scarce, *musábilah* is a torture, and last but not least the Badawin and his stock are vulnerable to any raiding party that may be paying off old scores, or thinks to add to its stock of camels. For in summer the whole Badawin world knows where each Shaikh So-and-So is camped.

Even in peace-time there is therefore always some anxiety, but if hostilities should exist between two tribes or groups of tribes, and the Central Government is busy elsewhere, then over a wide area no man's life or cattle are safe; and in addition to having to endure the intense heat and privation of the Arabian summer, strong patrols have continually to move about and guard the camel-herds and bring them in at night. Nor is this all, for if peace reigns, summer is the time when the *zakát* tax has to be paid to the Central Government or Ruler of the State. So on top of all his troubles, and just when he is most hard up, the Badawin may any day expect his lord and master's tax-gatherers suddenly to appear with a *sarîya* (armed party). Woe betide him who tries to evade this tax! There is no escape, for like the enemy, the tax-gatherer knows where each Badawin shaikh has camped for the summer.

735 651

The enemy when anarchy exists, the Government official when peace reigns, have each got the wretched Badawin secure in summer. Both are hated; both, he believes, are out to hurt him, and both are the foe of him and of his kind.

221 132 At long last October, or the *wasm* season (the rains) arrives and small clouds begin to gather in the far west and south, and once more

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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Fetching Water

in of firewood goes on, and the girls and children get in a two- or three-mile walk every morning. It is good for them and makes them strong, straight and fit to bear children later on, and they know it.

Two hours later they return, each bearing an enormous load of *'arfaj* bushes on their heads, and followed by the tired little mites who have gone with them. In the meantime the woman of the tent has not been idle. She, with her sister, or old mother if she has one to help her, has been sunning the family bedding (*lahdf*) and putting it away, or has been cleaning pots and pans from the previous night's meal and has tidied up the tent. She has sent off the spare shepherd to go and fetch water from the wells they have just vacated, perhaps 10 miles back. He takes for the purpose a couple of male camels kept back from the herd, on whom he loads up either two large camel water-skins, or four goatskins. This will suffice for the needs of the tent and its neighbours. Should a small *thamila* exist near them, as is often the case after rains, the daughters of the house will once again be sent off with goatskins (*garab*) to collect the water—(a *thamila* is a small supply of water lying under the surface of a dry, sandy water-course which does not sink deep and disappear completely, because it lies on subsurface rock or clay). The girls scratch away the sand to a depth of two or three feet to reach the brown, muddy liquid. They ladle it into skins by means of a small cup (*jiddd*) of tamarisk wood, and keep it on one side for drinking purposes only. The water is at first opaque and yellowish, but the silt soon settles.

To keep the water-skins cool during the day, a bed of *'arfaj* bush is made just outside the women's quarters, and all skins are laid on the bed.

By now it is time to prepare the midday meal. If the family is a fairly prosperous one, rice will be cooked and made tasty with *semen*, clarified butter of sheep's milk, and all will sit down and eat their fill. If the family is a poor one, there will be no meal till sundown.

After the midday meal, the woman of the house will first clean the cooking pots, and then start weaving any cloth that may be required for the tent, or if the tent is complete she will work on a *gdta* or *mansaf*, which in due course she will sell when she visits a town to do *mushilah*. A *gdta* if well and artistically made will bring her in Rs.45 to Rs.50—a vast sum of money for a Badawin family.

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

512 all he wants. Coffee then goes round, and master, servants and women
264 go early to bed.

132 That night Allah the All-seeing, the All-merciful, is good to his
512 people. As the camp sleeps, a great thundercloud appears and gradually creeps up from the far north-west. Nearer and nearer it comes till at 3 a.m. it is exactly overhead. There is a death-like stillness, and even the camp dogs cease their baying and the sleepers turn uneasily in their sleep. The air is oppressive, even hot. Suddenly a cold chill wind begins to blow; the shepherd watching his sheep in front of the tent wakes his master and whispers, "Allah Kerim, Insha'llah it will rain, the mercy of God is coming, Oh Allah, give us of thy blessing". Suddenly there is a soul-raising thunderclap followed by a simultaneous blaze of forked lightning, which lights up the whole landscape a vivid bluey-white. Clap after clap follows; each rolling away in the distance like salvos of great artillery. Shouts and cries rise from the camp. The men rush to the camels and sheep, the women to the tent ropes, and then with a dull roar growing every instant deeper and closer, the rain comes at last. At first great heavy drops the size of small saucers, then in a few seconds the downpour. And what a downpour! Fortunately there is no wind but just a deep booming roar, as the water pours down in sheets. For ten minutes everyone holds on to what he can grip, expecting the squall which usually follows such rain. But none comes. Then cries of joy as the open spaces round the camp site begin to fill with water. The tents perched up on higher ground than the surrounding country are safe from flood, but by 3.30 a.m. the countryside is a vast shallow lake. By
● 312 3.45 a.m. the rain thins off. Regardless of everything, men, women and
512 children rush forth to collect the delicious rain-water into every kind of utensil they can lay hands on: water-skins, basins, tins and cooking pots of every description are made to serve. When these are filled women and children sit in the water and literally wallow in it for sheer joy. The men rouse the camels and make them drink knee deep in the fresh brown sea. Everyone is delirious, for they have been drinking brackish and even salt water for the last nine months. The great blessing has come at last. God is great, God is good to the *Muslimín*. The incongruous part of it all is that it is still pitch dark.
000 No one has a lantern, no one cares. At length dawn breaks. Prayers,

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI 1
Bedouins MJ4

plenty of grazing, he postpones this final move as late as possible, but if the reverse, then the 20th May may see him settled down for his enforced five months of idleness and physical discomfort.

As far as North-Eastern Arabia is concerned the following are the great Badawin camping grounds from north to south:

(*a*) *Safwan*—immediately north of Kuwait Border, in Iraq territory.
(*b*) *Jahrah*—at the head of the Bay of Kuwait.
(*c*) *Kuwait*—(Shamiyah and Dasma wells) outside the walls of Kuwait.
(*d*) *Subaihiyah*—on the southern border of Kuwait.
(*e*) *Tawil*—S.W. of Jabal Wara and 10 miles N.W. of Subaihiyah in Kuwait.
(*f*) *Wafra*—in the Kuwait Neutral Zone.
(*g*) *'Ark*—on the southern border of Neutral Zone.
(*h*) *Jeriyah Ilya*, *Jeriyah Sifli*, *Safa*, *Haba*, *Qara'a*—in the Mutair Summan country 170 miles S.S.W. of Kuwait (Sa'udi Arabia).
(*i*) *Hafar al Bátin*—in the Bátin Valley (Sa'udi Arabia) 150 miles S.W. of Kuwait.
(*j*) *'Ajibba*—in the Harb tribal country, S.W. of the Mutair Summan (Sa'udi Arabia).
(*k*) *Ingair*, *'Nta*, *Awaina*, *Sarrar*—in mid Hasa, Wadi al Miyah region (Sa'udi Arabia).
(*l*) *Qatif*, *Hufuf*—in South Hasa (Sa'udi Arabia).

There is also the well-known camping quadrilateral in the Iraq Neutral Zone lying 140 miles west of Kuwait, known under the general term of *Tawal al Dhafir*, and consisting of several well-areas such as Dulaimiyah, Arkhaimiyah, Julaida, Al Thamiriyah, etc.

By tribal law each of the above wells belongs to a different tribe or section of tribe, and strangers can theoretically be kept away from them. Actually under the strong rule of the Al Sa'ud and the Al Subah, other tribes or parts of tribes are to-day allowed to make use of them, provided there is no overcrowding and there is no enmity between the actual owners of the water and the strangers. It goes without saying that should a tribe of a foreign State camp for summer

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait MI1
Bedouins MJ4

B 312 on such wells, then it will have to pay *zakát* for that year to the Central Government in whose state it is a guest.

K 132 B 132 The first signs of the coming summer are the drying up of all desert grasses (*'ashib*), the mirage—which now flickers everywhere and seems to fill every small depression in the countryside with a little lake of water—and the sandstorms. The glare also becomes intense and makes the desert-dweller fold his *kaffiyah* or head-cloth across his face. The winds are hot as though driven out of a great furnace by some gigantic bellows. The traveller now finds himself mistaking bushes and animals for distant tents and men, especially at midday and as night draws near.

Men and animals now want to drink more often, so of necessity tents are brought closer to water.

The women in their *biyút sha'ar* (hair tents) also feel the effects of the sun and erect false roofs of saffron or other coloured rugs above their heads inside their tents, to keep out the stinging rays.

Both men and women grow palpably thinner, while all develop a much deeper tan than during the winter.

The most unpleasant feature of this half-season period is the sandstorm. These storms grow more and more frequent and vicious until by June the countryside seems to have taken on a permanent canopy of sand-haze which lodges in nostrils, eyes and throat. Alternating with these sandstorms come gentle south-east winds, or dead calms which bring up heavy dews in their train. These too are most trying.

B 221 312 By the 5th June the desert world, which has slowly been converging on the well-areas, now definitely goes to ground and camps on water. If these well-areas are popular, several thousand tents will congregate close together and as near to the well-heads as possible—the tents of the shaikhs and prominent men standing out of the general mass by reason of their size and the number of their poles.

At Jahrah in 1935, for instance, when Kuwait tribes as well as Dhafir, Shammar (Abda), Dahamsha (*'Anizah*) and *'Ajman* details were camped there, the sight was a remarkable one, for well over three thousand black hair-tents were congregated in an area only 1 mile square.

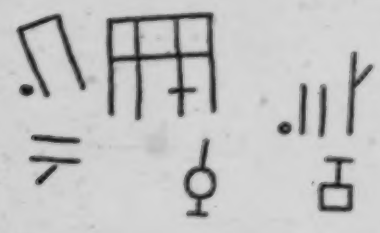
K 132 About 10th June, if the year is a normal one, North-East Arabia and especially the Persian Gulf seaboard is visited by what is known as

A TYPICAL WELL IN THE DESERT (AL RUMÁH)

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

Wasms in Wells

619 Below are some odd *wasms* found on north side of Wára.



WELLS

619 Almost all the great permanent wells of Arabia belong to some
● 312 tribe or other, and have been in their possession since earliest times.
423 Hence, if they are examined carefully, the *wasm* of the tribe to which they belong will usually be found, cut in the rocky sides some way down on the inside, or engraved on one of the large stones built round the well mouth.

It is important to know this, as the ownership of disputed wells and their surrounding grazing grounds can nearly always be determined by such marks if it is known where to look for them.

This right to own wells is not confined only to tribes, but is also the prerogative of individual Badawin, and has in the past been the cause of many a fierce fight. For instance, supposing a man camping alone in summer selects a suitable site for his family's tents, near where he thinks he will find water, and does dig a well, and does find water, then that well becomes his *milk*, or personal property, and no other person may draw water from it, or use it for the future except with the owner's express permission. In the Kuwait hinterland, where there is sub-surface water nearly everywhere, such wells are frequent, and many are the disputes that arise from strangers attempting to use them.

NATURAL WELLS

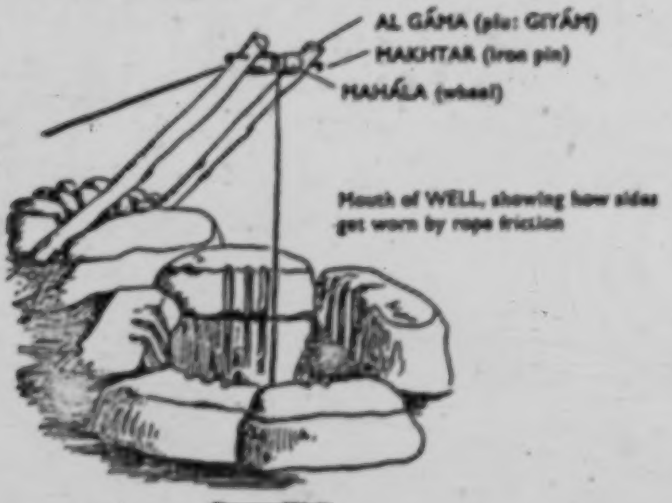
312 The Natural Wells (*dákal*, plu. *dukál*) of the Summán region occupied by the Mutair Thwa (150–200 miles south-west of Kuwait).

There are some one hundred *dukál* scattered along the northern

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
Bedouins MJ4

edge of the Dahana where it joins the Summán, but only some eighteen 312
are well-known ones having permanent water.

The entrances are usually fissures in the rocks (or more often a hole like a well), which open out thirty or forty feet below into an



Desert Well.

open dry cavern. From these, passages leading to a series of other caverns lead off in various directions, one or more of which contain large natural cisterns or subterranean lakes.

The *dukál* are excellent places for travellers or smugglers to drink from, but useless for camels or sheep, as the water cannot be drawn up to the top and poured into leather watering basins. A man has to go down with his water-skin, and crawl for many yards on his stomach, or on all fours, before he can even get one skinful of water.

The water is usually very good and clear, and in rain water pools, and simple.

Some remarkable examples of *dukál* also exist in the northern desert, fifty to one hundred miles south of the Amman–Baghdad desert route.

Following are the most important of the Summán *dukál*:

Al Raggas	Um Jamal
Al Thaiyib	Bith al Aabad

k Dickson G-5 (1929-47) 1951 MI 1 Kuwait
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List of Nar ral Wells

●312

Ab al Dhaiyán
Al Jarthi
Um al Qurún
Al Khalifa
Al Amiyir
Um Warcham
Al Khuraishif
Um Nakhla
Abu Sudaira
Al Futaih
Al Shamshúl
Al Ajáji
Abu Sukhaim
Abu Tumba
Al Mazár
Al Tashámi
Abu Harmala
Al Furaih
Shilaham

13: Thesiger T-3 (ca. 1948) 1950 MJI Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

178 they must leave their rifles at a police post, but once they have climbed
619 back on to the escarpment they are free to do as they like, subject only to the restraints of tribal life. Similarly, while they are inside the towns of Inner Oman, where the Imam has established law and order, they must behave themselves, but once they are outside the walls they can only be controlled by diplomacy and not by force, while everywhere in the Dhahirah of Northern Oman jealous and often hostile sheikhs vie with each other in the lavishness of their hospitality and the scale of their gifts to win the support of the Badu. There no sheikh can enforce his authority over the tribes, and none of them would try, lest by doing so he should alienate their support in time of need.

133 To understand the Badu character and way of life you must under-
312 stand the land in which they live—a harsh, unforgiving land which conditions their lives so that they, too, are hard, hard in body and mind. They live in the desert—that is to say, in country which, judged by ordinary standards, is waterless. This applies equally to the barren, broken limestone mountains near the southern coast, to the flat, featureless gravel plains, and to the sands of the Empty Quarter itself, where the mountainous dunes, some of which are 700 feet high, run one behind the other for hundreds of miles. There are, of course, some wells in this desert, but they are usually few and far between: the Sa'ar country has two permanent wells in it, Manwakh and Zamakh; the Manahil country has three or four. Thus in an area the size of Norfolk there might be two wells. I have myself twice travelled four hundred miles between wells. I admit that this is exceptional, but Badu have raided across these very stretches of desert, riding out and back again without touching at a well. You can think what this means when you realize that this distance is twice as far as from Dover to Edinburgh, and that these Arabs travelled at a speed of three miles per hour, relying only on the water which they could carry with them without foundering their camels, and that the camels themselves did not get a drink until they returned a month later.

137 It seldom rains in this desert; in many parts it has not rained for five
221 years, and I have been in places where not a drop of rain has fallen for twenty-five years. By Badu standards a couple of hours' heavy rain in the
132 year means a good year. They cannot, therefore, cultivate, but have to
233 depend for their livelihood on their small herds of camels, and in quest of the pasturage which springs up after rain they travel great distances. Most of this vegetation is not grass, but desert plants like the succulent yellow-flowering tribulus and heliotrope, and in the sands these plants will remain green after a few days' rain for as long as three and four years. But they do not last so long on the gravel plains and among the hills; in such places, however, grow scattered trees and bushes, such as the
233 acacias, which afford valuable pasturage. Where there is rich grazing the
262 Badu can remain for six and even nine months without water, for their camels get all the moisture they require from these green plants, and camels' milk suffices the Arabs themselves for food and drink. In the heat of summer the camels must be watered once a week, and if there is no well near the grazing on which they have wintered they must move back on to a permanent well and graze their herds as best they can on the

DS Theolgn T-3 (1946-47)1948 M31 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin M34

411 hand and all were the distinctive carnelian-
151 studded dagger, and one and all impressed
me as virile, reckless and uncontrolled, but
701 humorous and friendly. While we sat among
621 them talking there was a sudden stir, for they
had noticed a dozen mounted Arabs approach-
ing rapidly across the dunes. Then someone
recognized one of the camels and they re-
laxed. These camels were stretched out and
travelling very fast, yet were urged to even
greater efforts by the wild yells of their riders.
They were the scouts, sons of sheikhs and the
very pick of the tribe, who set out each dawn
to scour the surrounding desert, keen-eyed for
the tracks of strangers. Lithe, hard-bodied
and alert, these lads rode their splendid beasts
with effortless mastery. They had heard the
firing and, thinking the camp attacked, had
ridden back to help.

621 Scattered upon the dunes around us were
592 small black tents, round which naked infants
romped, while dark-clad women moved about
gathering sticks and tending herds of goats.
Sometimes a family changed its site, for,
though fear of raiders had imposed upon
them the need to keep together, their restless
nomad instincts drove them to constant move-
ment within the wide confines of the camp.
Such short migrations provided an interesting
sight as they moved slowly past. The children
drove the camels, laden with tents, cooking-
pots, watering-troughs and ropes, the simple
requirements of their life; while the Bedu
mothers and the virgin beauties of the tribe
rode in the slow swaying camel-litters.

571 That evening they feasted us on meat and,
after the camel herds had drifted in at dusk,
brought us great frothing bowls of milk, the
nectar of the Arabs. The night was filled with
the haunting sounds of an Arab camp—the
ceaseless restless moaning of camels, the bark-
ing of dogs, the rise and fall of Arab voices
from their gathering-places round the fires,
and sometimes the distant harmony of song.
312 Next morning when the sun was warm yet
drove our camels across the sandy plain to
water at the well, which is situated close
under high limestone cliffs on the northern
401 edge of the valley. A few Arabs had already
392 arrived and were fastening their pulleys to the
scaffolding around the well. It is over 200 feet
in depth and stone-lined, a monument to
some forgotten people in the dim past. At the
deep wells in the Najd the Arabs use their

V 388(B) (TEXT CONTINUED ON P. 400(A)--ANALYST

25: Thesiger T-3 (1944-47) 1949 MJ1 Saudi Arabia
Bedouin MJ4

• 312

P 399 (A)

312

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A

(Above) *Watering at Mawakh well. The rope, at either end of which a leather bucket hangs, runs over pulleys attached to scaffolding above the well, and the water is invariably raised by hand—never by camels, as in the Nejd. The well-ropes (made of palm-fronds), pulleys, buckets and troughs are brought down to the well by each family, and taken away after watering is complete. There were always an impatient crowd of Arabs and a milling throng of camels round the well, which was usually exhausted by midday.* (Right) *To Arab women falls the duty of filling the goatskins used for carrying water in the desert*

[462]

P 399 (B)

1
A [SEE P. 397 (A) -- ANALYST]

401 camels to draw up the water, but the southern
312 Bedu always lift it by hand. They fasten a
571 leather bucket, holding about four gallons, to
415 either end of the rope which runs over the
[96] pulley, so that as one bucket is drawn up full
the other descends empty. Men and women
draw together on the well-ropes, four or five
to each rope, singing in chorus as they work.
233 We had not been here long before the camel
herds arrived and the serious work of watering
began. Great leather troughs supported on
crossed wooden hoops were set up by each
family around the well. Soon there was no
room for more watering parties, and late-
comers had to wait their turn. The buckets
rose and fell and were tipped into the troughs
about which the thirsty camels pushed and
thrust while their calves frolicked around.
Shouting herdboys, stripped to the waist, ran
in and out among them, driving away camels
which did not belong to them, and restraining
the more impatient of their own. Others
scratched the hind-quarters of their favourite
beasts, while they sang them their watering
songs to induce them to drink deep. When
they had drunk they were couched nearby, to
be watered again later in the day, before
being driven back to pasturage. Round the
well-mouth women filled their water-skins,
which then lay swollen and quivering upon
the ground, guarded from the trampling feet
of the camels by shrill-voiced little girls, clad
only in a leather fringe around their waists.
562 Few of the women were veiled and all joined
freely in the constant jests and laughter.
Among them was a tall girl of startling
beauty. She had come down to the well early
in the day, carrying a water-skin and accom-
panied by her young sister. The centre of a
happy laughing group of lads, she dallied
here till the evening.

574 A family of Sa'ar from off the mountains
291 were camped under an overhanging cliff
171 nearby, and they bade us join them and drink
coffee. Kinsmen of the Bin Ma'aruf, they yet
49 differed from them in their dress and way of
life. They were indigo-dyed loincloths and
wraps around their shoulders, as is the fashion
among the Southern Bedu, whereas the Bin
Ma'aruf were clad like the Northern Arabs in
long white shirts whose pointed sleeves fell
nearly to the ground. They were returning
to their homes in Raidat al Sa'ar, a two days'
[134] journey to the south. Plantations of sorghum
312] and beans are grown there in a shallow valley,
guarded by numerous stone-built forts and
609 watch-towers, which look out across the dou-
ble rocky plateau. Raidat is seldom visited
by other Arabs, for it is the very stronghold of
the Sa'ar, who have an evil reputation for

camps move to the Euphrates, or on to the main groups of wells around which cluster tented towns of hundreds of families, odd Sulubba families will remain far out in the desert, drinking from some tiny water hole in a lonely ravine known only to the Sulubba themselves. There they will live almost the lives of wild animals, with only a few sheep or donkeys, hunting gazelle and often dressing in their skins.

The Sulubba alone knows the wild animal life of the desert intimately. As a gazelle hunter, his skill is incredible, and many live very largely on gazelle meat and dress in their skins. The Beduins often employ the Sulubba as guides in the desert or consult them regarding routes, grazing, or camping grounds.

Apart from hunting gazelle, and menial work for the Beduins, the Sulubba also live by grazing and breeding animals. Some of them are prosperous and own large flocks of sheep. They have a few camels, but their most distinctive possessions are the white asses. Probably the Sulubba originally bred asses rather than camels for riding purposes, because if they had any good camels the Beduins were likely to covet them. But since no Beduin would stoop to ride an ass, the Sulubba were left in undisputed possession. Some of these animals have marvellously swift paces, and are almost as capable of resisting thirst as is the camel.

During the last ten years, the desert belonging to Iraq, Syria, and Trans-Jordan has been brought under Government control. As a result the Beduins are no longer able to bully the Sulubba quite as unrestrainedly as before and the latter are learning to complain to the police when they are beaten or abused.

In 1919-22, the recrudescence of Wahhabism in central Arabia produced a tremendous outburst